Spira Respirans:

Or, The WAY to the Kingdom of HEAVEN, BY THE Gates of HELL;

In an Extraordinary

EXAMPLE.

BY

A Person brought to the Depths of Despair and Anguish, recovered by the mighty Grace and Power of God, and rais'd to Heights of Assurance and Joy.

Wherein are some uncommon Considerations concerning the manner of Salvation and Damnation, Life and Death, Happiness and Misery. With some Fundamental Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul.

Joh. 3. 8. *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is Born of the Spirit.*

London, Printed and Sold by *T. Sowle*, near the *Meeting-house* in *White-Hart-Court* in *Gracious-street*, 1695.

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His Book

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Spira Reſpirans, &c.

GReat and Marvellous are the Works of Almighty God in Heaven above, in Earth beneath, and in the Souls of Men; neither hath he left himſelf without Witneſſes in all Ages, of his mighty Operations: Even in theſe laſt of the laſt Days, hath he given ſome Eminent Teſtimonies of his Eternal Power, and Godhead; in Things which duly conſider'd, it muſt be confeſs'd the Finger of God was there.

But ſtupid Mortals are very inclinable, either to diſcredit even Matters of Fact, or at leaſt being unable to deny what has been done, to be little, or not at all affected; or perſwaded to behave themſelves towards God, as they ought, on ſuch occaſions.

And of all Divine workings, thoſe that are meerly Spiritual, on the Souls of Men, do commonly gain leaſt Cre-

dit with any, except thoſe that have been the Subjects of like Operations, inſomuch, that whatever is ſaid to be done more than ordinary here, is uſually judged falſe, or condemned by the (ſuppoſed ſcandalous) Name of Enthuſiaſm.

But whatever Men may ſay, or think of Things, or of Me, as pretending to declare an inſtance of God's acting in Spiritual Nature; it is now ſeveral Years I have laboured between a ſort of fear, and a deſire, of willingneſs, and unwillingneſs of publiſhing the following Relation thereof. For,

1. Being greatly influenced by the Grace of God therein, to deſire the Manifeſtation of his Glory, and to endeavour to profit my Fellow Creatures, I have been ever ſince deſirous to bear my Teſtimony for God, againſt the Atheiſm of the World, and Carnality of the greateſt part of thoſe who profeſs Religion; and if I may, to be an Inſtrument of ſome Spiritual Advantage, to the Choſen, and true Believers. But,

2. The

2. The Root of Self being consequently wounded, and so glorying in any thing but the Cross of Christ excluded; I have had also a desire to forbear or lye hid, lest any Man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or 2 *Cor.* 12. 6. heareth of me, and I thereby be tempted to think of my self above what I ought. And truly for some time since, I my self have been afraid to read that short account I at first wrote of the gracious dealings of God to me, and having communicated it to some Friends, I have ever since been doubtful to publish a fuller Account thereof, lest by their means I may make my self known; but if they continue Friends, they will not compel me, who am 2 *Cor.* 12. 11. nothing, and desire to be more so in my own Eyes; that the Grace of God alone may be magnified. Yet I would not have it thought that I shall doubt, or be unready to appear to give all possible satisfaction of the Truth of what I write to any; if I shall be convinced that it will be for the Glory of God, the good of Men, or

my Abaſement; or that thoſe who will not believe what I have written, may be ſatisfied by what I can ſay.

But as at firſt I was not well able to ſpeak, or write ſuch great things God acted in and upon me, 2 *Cor.* 12. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. yet having an Earneſt Deſire that others might the more admire the Divine Love, and Goodneſs, by occaſion of me, and rejoice, and praiſe the moſt High, with the holy Angels, hearing of his Tranſcendent, Free, Loving-kindneſs in Jeſus Chriſt, in the Converſion of ſo great a Sinner, I was conſtrained to write what I could; ſo now tho' too much under Inability, and Indiſpoſition, yet finding a little more ſtrength; which I have long deſired of God, and waited for, to the fuller declaration of this inſtance of his Power, and Grace; you ſhall have ſo much as he will enable me to utter.

I ſhall then firſt (tho' it may ſeem leſs pertinent) give ſome ſhort account of that Sickneſs, in which, and by the occaſion of which, the mighty Work, and Favour of God was made known to me; becauſe I would not my ſelf forget any thing of what then befel me, or

be

be ever unmindful how God bringeth good out of evil.

The very Day I was first afflicted (by the permission of the Lord) with this Sickness, I remember not; but my Disease was at first no more than an Ague, beginning with a short cold Fit, then following a pretty long hot one, of which Fits I had three, or four; in order to the removing of which Ague, I took an Emetick, with some other things, which Emetick (tho' my Ague went away) left (by what Error I know not) some evil Effects behind, as I thought; as Vomiting up what I took for some time; and which was more tedious, a continual Spitting, with great Thirst, and such Faintness, and Weakness, I could scarce stand but; by the use of a great Cordial, which some about me had provided, (the Lord reward them) I got a little Strength; but I had a better Cordial from the Almighty afterward, the Lord give them the like.

Hitherto I was my own Physician, but it was thought fit by those with whom I was, to have some Doctors advice; and one was called, who prescrib'd

scrib'd something which did but little or nothing, and came no more: Another was sent for, or rather God sent him, but chiefly for another end than to Cure me, *viz.* to terrifie me with the danger of Death. For this Doctor when he had seen me, said, he would prescribe Catharticks to take off that Spitting; and if that could not be done, it would fall upon my Lungs and kill me, which Purges I afterwards took, I think with some Benefit. This was on the Lord's Day, *Octob.* 18. 1685. in the 25th Year of my Age.

I had perceived a day or two before this time, (as I thought) a more than Creature Power, on a sudden strongly touching or moving my Soul, and minding me of my Sins, at which a Storm was raised in my Thoughts, and by the greatness of the Billows thereof I was troubled much, and had resolves of leading a better Life, if God should raise me: I sent for a Friend, who came and prayed with me, and gave me what Counsel he could; I greatly desired another, who was a Minister, to come to me, hoping for some Counsel, or Assistance from him, but could not obtain his

his Company, nor had I at all any cam
to me, in the Miniſterial Office, Go
was pleas'd to work without them
My Soul-trouble continued, tho' no
ſo great as afterwards, I having n
ſenſe of much danger from my Diſeaſe
till the Doctor (as I ſaid) doubting o
my Life, had pronounced, as it were
the Sentence of Death upon me, and
heard him utter that then moſt uncom-
fortable word KILL; then, then wa
I ſtruck with an exceeding Agony an
Terror on my Soul, by the fearful Ap-
prehenſion of Imminent Death, m
Conſcience being awakned, and I ſee-
ing my unpreparedneſs for it. The
was I ſeized with pale Deſpair, the
was I filled with that Anguiſh, which
think it impoſſible for me to make th
unexperienced conceive the like of. I
which amazed condition had I continu-
ed as many Days, as I did Hours, m
Mortal Frame I believe would not have
abide, but have ſuffered a total Diſſolu-
tion, my Mind being then capable o
nothing but my Sorrow. O that
could give you a ſight of what I ſuffer'd
or knew whereby to paint out to you
or reſemble the Terrors of the Almigh-
ty. Neve

Never I believe did a guilty Male-
ctor, (who just before hoped to scape
he Judgment) receive the unexpected
entence of Death with greater Asto-
ishment; or a Condemned Criminal
ee the preparations of the Instruments
f his Torture with more Amazement.
Death I fear'd, and believed was not
ar from me; and after it, Hell I be-
ieved would certainly follow. When
looked about me, I beheld a few help-
ess Mortals affrighted at my Cries,
whose Pity could not lend me the least
elief, whose Tears were far from as-
waging the Drought of my Soul.
When I looked before me, I saw as it
were the Fiery Lake gaping for me, and
Devils waiting to receive me as their
Vassal under their Power and Domini-
on. When I looked back, I saw my
ins, the Iniquities of my Heels, as the
wift Avengers of Blood, closely pursu-
ng me, who knew no City of Refuge
or so wilful a Sinner. When I looked
ithin, there was the Worm, a guilty
onscience gnawing, accusing; a Will
ost foully defiled, and deformed with
ilful sinning. When I looked up, which
as yet most uncomfortable, (and up
I must

I muſt look, I knew, for help, or n
ver find it) I thought I ſaw an Angr
Irreconciled God, who made me po
ſeſs the Iniquities of my Youth, wh
had utterly caſt me off for my Sins. C
that I could make you alſo underſtand
little of my Experience what is meant b
that dreadful thing, that is call'd
falling in the Hands of the Living God,
that you might fly from Sin, that is ſo
much contrary unto him. Could I call
up ſome Damned Soul, or Infernal Spi-
rit, to tell his Caſe, he could, I believe,
ſay no more, but that he has actually
aſſur'd to him as laſting, that Miſery I
felt, and expected preſently to be con-
firm'd in, that he really hath loſt that
good, I now deſpair'd ever to find.
Had this my Anguiſh been remedileſs,
my Hell alſo had been begun. Could
I ſet before you the Aſtoniſhed World
at the coming of the Judge of the Quick,
or the Trembling Bodies and Souls of
the raiſed Dead at the Laſt Judgment,
you might apprehend ſomewhat of the
Horror that was much more than paint-
ed out in my Soul. Believe me Reader,
my Miſery, my Wound of Spirit, was
more than I was able to bear, yet what

I was

was alſo unable to get from under, nd uncurable; as far as I then ſaw. I as for a time truly out of this World, s to all the Comforts of it, in an Exaſie of Anguiſh, one Day of which a- in I would not chuſe, for all the Plea- es, or Profit this World can give. Will you not believe me yet? Yet con- der a little, Did you never know what is Fear, what is Diſcontent, and ther troubleſome Thoughts? Yes, it nay be, but not how far Paſſions may e intended, or greaten'd. I can ſay o more; God alone, who let looſe on e an Accuſing, Terrifying Devil, and Sin-wounded, Awakened Conſcience, n likewiſe ſpeak to you feelingly.

But thoſe who have had the like errible Senſations, can bear witneſs vith me, who have had their Sins as npardoned ſet in order, or rather diſrder before them; as now were mine, he Lord ſhewing me the greatneſs hereof, ſo that I was conſtrained to onfeſs, as I now freely and underandingly do, that Sin is an Evil greaer than any Miſery I have either felt, r could have ſuffer'd, had I thence een Damn'd indeed. A Carnal Mind

perhaps

perhaps will not believe me, yet I say Sin is a greater Evil in it self, or as an Act against God, than all the Sufferings a Creature can possibly undergo, or meet with by it: For what is the Creatures either Being, or happy Being, in comparison of God's Being according to Himself, or as becomes him, in all Perfections, rather than he should deny himself, as Sinners would have him? Could he be suppos'd so to do, it were good that I, and all the rest of the Creation, either cease to be, or be miserable for ever.

And here by way of Digression, I shall Essay to write a few things concerning the Unhappiness of the Damned; and I hope my Thoughts, though perhaps somewhat uncommon, may not be unapproved, or unuseful, conceiving my self to have had a nearer prospect of that sad Condition, to have been brought down nearer to the Pit, than the greatest part of Mortals that are capable of relating what they know about it; whereby, according to what I can argue from what I know, and can conceive, (but who alive knows) I hope

hope I shall reprove some Mistakes Men are very apt to be led into.

1. Then I cannot conceive that God, who is Love, and Goodness it self, is to be thought, or can be suppos'd with any reason, actually to torment, or cause any grievous Sensations, or disorderly Thoughts, in any of his Creatures, or to take pleasure therein: He who Swears he Delights not in the Death of a Sinner, *Ezek.* 33. 11. cannot well be thought to be pleas'd with his Damnation, or continuing and growing in Sin, as the Damned may most probably be thought to do, and may be perceived by the Devils continuing such: God cannot be thought to have need so much as of the Being of any of his Creatures, much less agreeing to his Perfection is it to want their ill Being, or to cause, or desire, their disorderly, or sinful Thoughts. Or do they well know what they say, who teach us strange things about something they call God's Vindictive, or Revenging Justice, [of which I shall say something more hereafter] there cannot come to God any increase of Happiness by the Creatures,

Creatures, or their Obedience, but 'tis their own Intereſt to obey; or can he loſe any thing by their Rebellion? *Job* 35. 6. *If thou ſinneſt, what doeſt thou againſt him?* ver. 7. *If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him?* &c. Yet we ſee in this Life, that ſinful Men are apt to look upon their Miſeries as cauſed by God, or as coming from him in way of Revenge, or to make himſelf ſatisfaction, which can in no wiſe come by the unhappineſs of ſinning; and we cannot think they will have better Thoughts of him in Hell, if they come into that condition.

2. It is alſo as apparent, that the Creature going on in Rebellion, and turning from God the Fountain of all Good, cannot be Happy, but muſt be Miſerable, when God has left it as to his Chearing and Comforting Preſence, or rather, it is gone where God's Comforting and Loving Preſence cannot be had, ſeeking Happineſs where it is not to be found, *viz.* in it ſelf, where as long as it unduly ſeeks it, it muſt certainly be without it, when the doing the Will of the Creator is the only

Work and Buſineſs wherein the Creature can poſſibly be perfectly, and always pleaſed.

3. That though we ſuppoſe the Creatures turning from God, the ſole Cauſe of their own unhappineſs, yet that unhappineſs muſt be exceeding great; my Experience may a little convince, if you will believe me, tho' but ſome of my Paſſions were exaſperated. But you may more fully be perſwaded, if you can alſo conceive the greatneſs of the Affections of the Mind; as the ſtrength of Deſire after Happineſs and Pleaſure, that Immortal Deſire of perfect Satisfaction, and Bliſs: Now wholly to ſeek it where it can never be found, and conſequently for ever wholly to loſe it, and conſider that Loſs (as I my ſelf for ſome time did) as irrecoverable, how great an Anguiſh! how great Deſpair! how great Damnation!

But to come as near you as I can, tho' thereby I ſhall go farther from the thing, and to uſe your own ſinful Paſſions, aſſuring you they may be as much greater as the Objects can be greater:

Have

Have you ever known the condition of some doting Lovers? How uneasie are they under the petty Loss of their but Mortal Deities when lost, before enjoy'd so far as to find, that Happiness was not there? In what vehement Expressions have they oft bewrayed their great unrest? Have not their Anxious Thoughts deprived them of all Comfort, and sometimes brought them even to the Grave?

Have you conceived the Torment of the Envious, when the Objects of his hate have been happy above his reach? Have you felt or seen the Wrath of the Angry, how greatly he suffers when he can't be revenged? How properly may he be call'd a Child of Wrath? And how probably it may be thought that that Wrath which Men think to be in God, is really in the Angry Creatures, the Vessels thereof? Have you any Experience what Agonies the fearful have sometimes suffer'd at the expectation of but seeming Evils? Have you ever tasted the Bitterness of Sorrow, so commonly met with, at the loss of but perishing Goods? Where is the Stoick that knoweth none of these

things? There is none, I believe, nor none that in this Life knows to what a degree of intention the Affections of the Mind are capable of being rais'd; nor have many experienced them so strong as I have felt them. Now when all the Thoughts shall be wholly disorder'd, all the Passions unduly greaten'd, always having unsatisfying Objects, who can conceive this to be little, yea, who can imagine greater Torment?

4. Lest any should think we esteem the Misery of a Lost Sinner only Mental, and they think therefore they need not so much dread it: Let me tell them, we do indeed esteem the Misery of a lost sinful Soul, greater in it self, than in what it can have by occasion of the Body, to which it is, or may be join'd; and if they think otherwise, they know not (as I do) what that Scripture means, *Prov.* 18. 14. *The Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmity, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* But yet if there are any so far drowned in Matter, or in Love with Body, that they now value nothing as good or evil, but what is so to them by means and occasion of the

the Body: Let them consider that it cannot be thought that a Body to which so uneasie a Soul is join'd, as we have endeavour'd to perswade that a Damned one must be, can be any way at ease, or rather the Soul in relation to it. If the disorderly Passions of the Mind, and the foolish abuse of bodily things, be a main cause of those so grievous Pains and Sicknesses Sinners feel in this Life, as I could easily prove. How can we think, that when all the Affections shall be extreamly out of order, and the Actions most greatly perverted, the Body can be free from being the occasion of the same, or greater Misery it was capable of in this Life: When Desperation, even in this Life, hath reduced the Body of such a despairing Soul, to grievous Disorders; and being yet Mortal, even to Death, in some that have died in such a condition: If you will believe such Relations; and if not, I can't expect your more ready Credence. I say, we can't conceive the Damned to be other than obnoxious to the same and greater Evils by means of the Beloved Body, that Sinners are liable to in this Life, [with this addition,

that

that they have no Death more to expect as a Remedy to put an end to their Sorrows] unless we believe (which is very unreasonable) that Hell hath at least this degree of Happiness, to Cure the Effects of Sin in the Body. And altho' those who don't believe the materiality of the Soul, cannot consequently conceive a locality of Hell, while they think the Soul in a state of Separation; yet it is most evident, that when the Soul shall be again united to, and act with its Body, in the Resurrection, that Body must have a Place, or Locality, and the Soul with its Body must be either Happy or Miserable, and the Place where-ever it shall be will be Hell, and the Misery of that Place, and State, which is in Scripture set forth by Fire (if you believe Scripture) you must think as great, if not much greater, than what can come from the thing by which it is represented.

And it is our greatest Concern to get Security in this Life, that we shall never know experimentally in the Life to come, what that miserable State, Place, and Fire is.

But again, could we suppose annihilation the only Punishment of an unrepenting Sinner (which we cannot, unless we could think God can disapprove his own Work, which is good, as the Beings of all Creatures are) it would be our highest Concern in this World to secure our Being, when not being is that which every Being doth naturally abhor, and would take away the good of well-being, or being to the praise of God, which by Grace is most desirable: But to be an Enemy to God, and hate him for ever, is a Thought, that to a Soul once in Love with him, is worse than any other Evil, either of annihilation or unhappiness. Of which Devilish Condition, in my Agony, I had also some dreadful Apprehension, remembering a Saying I had somewhere read; *Quod mens aliquatenus docta, vel sciens, damnata fit diabolica.* A Mind somewhat learn'd or knowing, being Damn'd, becomes a Devilish One. For it may be thought that the Torment of the Damned, (especially if they erroneously think God the Cause of it) may rather produce in them everlasting Hate, and Envy against his pure Majesty,

ty, than Repentance; except some yet unrevealed act of his Goodness present.

And so to return to that from whence I have digressed.

While I was thus in the Depths, the Lord shewed me such a sight of Sin, and of the greatness of mine, I never had before: That I had broke the whole Law of God, that there was no Sin committable but the unpardonable, or Sin unto Death, that I had not one way or other been guilty of, and had a Hand, or a Head, or a Heart, in it; no Evil but that I had done, or said, or thought, or will'd. Here I saw there is no such difference in Sinners as unrepenting Mortals are apt to think, supposing they shall be saved, because they are not so bad, and so bad: But that all Sin is the same in Nature, Root and Tendency, and every Act of Sin in an impenitent Sinner, includes all Sins, past, present, and to come: For if the Soul does not grieve for his Sins past, with a true hatred, and firmly purpose to leave, and forsake his Sins, that he might

might commit, for the future; then in every Act of Sin there is an implicit, and Virtual Ratification, and Approving of all Sins, past; and to come: And every Act of an unregenerate Man is sinful, *Gen. 6. 5. Psal. 14. 3.* For whatever such a one does, or leaves undone, apparently good, or apparently evil, it is all one, when all he does, or leaves undone, is from a wrong Principle, and to a wrong End, *viz.* from his own Will, and not God's, for his own, and not God's sake. The chief difference in Sinners is, that some are impenitent, others repenting; some going on in Sin, others in a way to leave it.

I was Educated by Religious Parents, had the Priviledge of their Precepts and Example, and thereby was restrained from running into many of those external Enormities some live in, yet could not see my Heart clean from any: Should I make a particular Confession of those Sins I can remember, either conceived in Heart, or also brought forth into action, it would prevent the rest of my Discourse.

While I was beholding in Soul this ugly ſight of Sin (more dreadful than the ſuppoſed appearance of all Devils can be thought) there was repreſented to me, as it were, a large Field, Wild, or Forreſt, in which was nothing but Briars, and Thorns, and here and there an old ſcrubed Tree, which ſignified to me the Wilderneſs of Sin in this Life, or the Wilderneſs of this ſinful Life. I could not ſee the Bounds of it, or beginning; but the end on the Left Hand, where was ſeen an Ocean, or Sea, whereof I could ſee no end, or bounds, but where it join'd with this Wilderneſs of Sin; this Ocean ſignified the Boundleſs Time after this Life: Where or when Sin begun with me was not eaſily apprehended, but whither it had brought me, as I then thought, was apparent, to the Brink of the Life to come. Whither that would carry me, was beyond the reach of my finite ſight, but to laſting Miſery I had, alas, too much ground to expect; which I ſaw dreadful, beyond what an ignorant Sinner could have done; I having been a Sinner againſt much Knowledge, great Light, and great Mercies.

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In this my unſpeakable woful Condition, I cried vehemently to God, (but Ah to an unreconciled God, as I fooliſh Sinner then thought, for it was I that was unwilling to be reconciled to him) with ſuch ſtrength, and earneſtneſs, an awakned Soul would do, who ſhould know himſelf to have but one Hour to work out his Salvation in; amazing, or melting into Tears thoſe that were with me. I could wiſh I could remember that Prayer my Soul was then pour'd out in, that I might never forget, and you might thereby the better ſee the frame of a Soul moſt earneſtly crying for Life and Salvation: But it is wholly gone from me, the Lord knows why. While I was in this ſad Condition, a Tempter was not abſent, or idle, but did vigorouſly beſtir himſelf, to maintain the ground for an evil Heart of Unbelief: And tho' I look'd to fall into an endleſs ſtate of Miſery every Moment, he was not aſham'd, to bid me put an iſſue to my Doubts, by Cutting my Throat: Haſty and Impatient was he indeed, but I believe he had a better gueſs in Naturals than the Doctor, and thought my Sick-

neſs was not like to be unto Death, but I conclude he was ignorant of the Purpoſe of God, and knoweth not who will be ſaved, till he ſeeth a Work of Grace wrought in their Souls, elſe he would not have tempted where he could not prevail. To this ſhameful Temptation I anſwered in my Mind; no, tho' I have but a Moment to live, I will not to ſin againſt God in that Moment. Here let me take notice, that tho' it were the higheſt Madneſs and Folly for me, who ſo greatly fear'd an endleſs ſtate of Miſery, to haſten, and aſſure my ſelf into it, as the Tempter will'd me; yet the Conſideration of that, that Argument from ſelf, was not the proper Argument to prevent me, but the Law of God, which he made come into my Mind.

As the Lord Jeſus, when the Tempter bid him caſt himſelf from the Pinnacle of the Temple, ſaid, *It is written, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*; and tho' as the Tempter ſaid, *It was written, He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee, Pſal.* 91. 11. he left out, *in all thy ways*. Now if Chriſt had

had cast himself down, he had gone out of his way, and tempted his God and Father. So likewise in the other Temptation of Worshipping the Devil, Christ sets the Law of God against him, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, Deut.* 6. 13. Nor could I have here so great an Argument against destroying my self, as the Command, *Thou shalt not Kill*, so in all Temptations, either from Devils, World, or Self, the Law of God is that that hath greatest strength to withstand them, especially to the Soul that both loves and fears him.

No sooner was this Temptation of Cutting my Throat repuls'd, without any yielding, so much as in Thought to it; but he came with a worse, a more horrid, a Thought to be Trembled at; which was, That I should have a Hateful Thought against God. Impudent Tempter! that would have me become Devil while yet in the Flesh; should I hate the Fountain of my Life, and Being, and from whom alone my Well being could possibly come? No, the Lord enabled me to hate the thought

of so vile a Thought, and not in the least to allow it. These two Suggestions came into my Mind suddenly, and with a sort of Violence, or Imperious Commanding, and seem'd to me as apparently and really to be dictated by another, *viz.* some Evil Spirit, and not meerly my own Thoughts, as what is said to one, by the audible Voice of some other Man, is undoubtedly believ'd to be the Speaker's Mind, and not the Hearer's. I shall not here give my Thoughts of the way, or manner of such Mental Speakings, but only from my Experience, I may assert it more than possible, yea, Matter of Fact, That God so pleasing the Will, or Thoughts of one Spirit, may be made known to another, without any outward Signs thereof. The like also at divers other times I have known, as not long after having had some Discourse with a Person who pleaded, that a Man may fall away from Grace; he having left me, there came a violent Thought, from some unseen Being, bidding me sin and try, which I answered, no that's an ill way to be sure; neither have bad Suggestions only been my Experience,

ence, but through Grace good ones alſo.

To me in this Condition, in this Hour of Darkneſs, in the Vale of the Shadow of Death, God's Providence ſent a certain Young Man (to whom I ſhall wiſh well as long as I live) who perſwaded me to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, that in him there was Forgiveneſs with God, and that I might yet obtain Pardon, he uſed many Scriptures to perſwade me, and I brought others againſt my ſelf, or rather againſt the Grace of God, whereby I perſwaded my ſelf that my Sins were ſuch that could not be forgiven. Theſe eſpecially ſtuck hard upon me, *Heb.* 6. 4. *For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened, and having taſted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt;* Ver. 5. *And have taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come.* Ver. 6. *If they fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance, &c.* And *Chap.* 10. 26. *For if we ſin wilfully, after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for ſin, but a fearful looking for of Judg-*

ment, and fiery Indignation. These Texts of Scripture I look'd on as mighty Barrs to barr me for ever out of Heaven. For looking back on my past Life how great a Sinner I had been, and also how Conscious thereof, so as sometimes to be much troubled at my Sins, and sometimes to seek God, with much Affection, Tears, and Resolves of Amendment; I thought also I had sometimes more than ordinary Impressions on my Mind from God; as one time walking alone and praying, I had this spoke to my Mind in a more than ordinary manner; *Hear, and thy Soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting Covenant with thee,* &c. *Isa.* 55. 3. Another time from a Sermon I had heard, I had great stirrings in my Mind, and at length was perswaded God was my God. One time I set my self apart, to make, as it were, a Covenant with God to love and obey him; yet all these, and divers other such workings of the Powers of the World to come, seem'd to have been rejected, worn off, and vanished, and I backslid, forgot God, and my Duty to him, and turned again to my Sins, like the Dog to his Vomit,

mit, omitting divers Duties, not having a Mind to pray, perhaps for some Months. The greateſt of which Backſlidings, I think next preceeded this time; for I was, as it were quite dead as to deſires after God; had begun idly to ſpend the Lord's Day; to be Covetous, and in great Care about the things of this World, and divers other Enormities I began to encline to. The conſideration of theſe things, and theſe Texts of Scriptures, expounded and apply'd by an evil Heart of unbelief, perſwaded me a while there was no Pardon for me, and drove me from God, rather than to him, in whom alone was help, and to whom alone neceſſity at length drove me.

The Lord enabled him then preſent with me, to inſtruct me in the way God ſaves Sinners, and to bring divers Scripture-promiſes, whereon God enabled me to lay hold, and to act Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and give up my ſelf to God, to be ſaved how he pleaſes, as I thought I had for ſome time before, indeed deſired to do.

Here

Here I cannot pass without reflecting, and a little considering the Inclination of a Soul awakned, and in distress for its Sins, erroneously to look upon God, as unreconciled to it, when indeed he is most willing to receive it: But it is the Soul it self (as I must witness) that is loath'd, and as it were hardly perswaded to be reconcil'd to God, having a secret unwillingness to part with something or other that is sinful, which it foolishly looks on as having something desirable in it: And indeed were not God an Almighty Perswader, and Wooer of Souls, the wretched Sinner, I believe, would not at all be made Friends with him. Had he not given the most Amazing Instances of Love to the worst of Sinners, even to send his only Begotten Son to die for them, the stubborn unbeliever would still resist, and look upon God as his Enemy. And it is no wonder that a Sinner, having chosen a false Good to and in it self, should have none, or but a pitiful disagreeing Notion of the goodness of God; who is always Good, and all Good, inconceivably Good, and better than the Creature can:

can either think or desire, yea, he is Goodness it self, and from him can proceed no manner of evil to his Creatures; and it is his Goodness that leadeth most effectually to Repentance: But the Creature being full of Evil, Hate, Wrath, and Revenge, looks upon God through the Glass of his own Heart, and fancies him such an one as himself; severe to mark Iniquity, hardly to be Intreated, apt to Revenge.

Here I might take up a great deal of time in shewing, that all those Evils that the Sinner looks upon as coming from God in way of Punishment and Revenge, are really from the Sinner himself, and his Fellow-sinners turning from God: But I should seem to some to contradict the Litteral Sense of some Texts of Scripture (tho' I believe a Soul perfectly in Love would not think I should contradict the spiritual meaning) and as some would say, leave no room for God's Justice; but they do not consider what his Justice is in himself; that he hath no need of the Sin or Misery of the Creature, no, nor of his very being that he may be Just;

no,

no, were it so, he were not compleat, and absolute in himself; which we must needs say he is, and that he hath an Eternal Justice in himself exercised before, and without relation to any, or all Creatures, in loving himself. But as to the Creatures departing from God, the Fountain of all Bliss, and and seeking Happiness in doing its own proper Will, God's vindicating himself from all liking or approving the Sinner in that his perverse way, is abundantly manifested, 1. In that the Sinner so departing from God, must meet with the Natural Fruits of his evil Ways, and can in no wise be Happy, or long Joyous, and Pleas'd, except he return in time, but will be miserable, anxious and dolorous, and that as long as he so departs, and returns not by Repentance. 2. That he hath sent his only Begotten Son, who suffer'd even to Death, to reconcile us to himself, that he might be just to forgive us our Sins, and so might communicate himself to us in a way of Grace and Love, as if we had never sinned; and so we might at length be justified, or made just in rendring him for the future, perfect,

and

perpetual Obedience, as the Angels in Heaven.

But to return to my self again, when I was once brought to believe my Sins might be forgiven, and God ready to forgive, and I was reconciled to him in the way of Salvation, through Free Grace, and that ſtubborn unwillingneſs in my Heart was Conquer'd by mighty Perſwaſions, and I yielded up that little, great, Idol Self-will to its due nothingneſs, then through Grace my Storms and Troubles ended; my Dear Saviour took them away; Joy, and Peace that paſſeth Underſtanding here ſucceeded. O Bleſſed Jeſus! thou hadſt Born abundantly more for me: My Anguiſh was but from fear and expectation of the Conſequents of my own Sins; thine was an exceeding Sorrow for the Sins of the whole World: My Grief gave but the common Diſtillations of ſinful Mortal Eyes: The weight of Sorrow that lay on thee, preſs'd out a Bloody Sweat; I was troubled becauſe I fear'd God would leave me to my ſelf, Thou knewest what it was (for a time) to be left of thy God and Father. I felt

but

but the Pain of a troubled Conscience, thou suffer'dst at once the Dolours of Soul and Body, even to Death; that I might hence have Life, Joy and Peace. I cry'd to God for Mercy and Forgiveness, as falling into Hell, but it was thy more earnest Prayer that obtain'd it for me, and all those that are saved.

Hence was it but a little while, but I was in the Spirit, taken up to Heaven, where were plainly, and not in Parables, shewed me the Mysteries of the Gospel, the Grounds of Man's, (yea, of my) Salvation, more clearly than I can relate: Here I plainly saw, that the First Cause, and Mover, was the Everlasting Free Love of God, in his Admirable Purpose in himself, of saving poor, sinful, lost, helpless, miserable Man; and not any thing of good foreseen in Man. And the Means and Way the Blessed Jesus, his only Begotten Son, whom he sent into the World to reconcile Sinners, by his Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and second Coming, to compleat their Salvation. In this Vision my Mind was perfectly

perfectly at eaſe, and nothing perplexed, in thinking on theſe things.

But I can ſay but little now, I muſt leave it to God himſelf to ſhew you that Viſion, with the clearneſs he ſhew'd it me. The World is like to lye in Contention ſome time longer, even about the Way to Heaven; yea, and thoſe that are going in the ſame Way, will hardly be perſwaded to think ſo of one another. But for the ſake of the Poor I muſt ſay, That although thoſe that are going in the Way of Salvation, may reaſon diverſly about that Way; and ſome may be unable to give an account how they came into it, yet the Way it ſelf, is the ſame: And thoſe that look moſt to the Celeſtial City, may look leaſt under their Feet, or on the Right Hand, and on the Left. Souls in the Work of Converſion, are more thoughtful of being obedient to the manifeſt Laws of God, than of Critiſizing about the manner how they come to be ſo; the Way is Obedience, and this is the Law, whoſoever will ſee Life muſt obey; *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Soul, all thy Mind, and all thy*

thy Strength, and thy Neighbour as thy self: This is the Everlasting, this is the Natural, this is the Revealed Law of God, this is the Way that Christ went in, led in, and taught, and came to convince us of our Obligation to, and Interest in. Self-will must fall down unto God's Will, Ineſs must perish when we come unto God, and even with our Neighbour it must be but equal. And when we have given away self and all to God, we have given him nothing but his own; yea, the very Will to give, tho' always free, is his Gift, so that meriting is impossible to us; yet God of his Grace, when we have given this much, I would say this little, gives us infinitely more, even Himself. To which Adorable Majesty be Everlasting Praise. Whosoever will keep his Royal Law of Love, shall certainly be saved, tho' others may think him out of the Way, yea, he himself. Nay, tho' his Understanding really err in many things doubtful greatly deceived.

Moreover in this Rapture I lost my self, and found God. Here I felt what it

it is for a Creature to tend to its Creator its proper Object, without respecting it self; here I became nothing, God was all in all: And for some time I had no reflect Thoughts of my self, but only was busied in a strong Desire towards God, but words fail here to express it; and no wonder when Knowledge seem'd to fail; and had I words proper to tell, the Ear would fail to hear what I should now say.

Then I saw by Faith my Sins in particular, were never to be remembered of God any more; those vile things I lately expected to be my great, and everlasting Shame and Confusion, to be carried by the Antitype of the Scape-Goat into the Land of Forgetfulness. Here I was assured my Name was written in the Book of Life from the Foundation of the World, and from the Faithfulness and Unchangeableness of God, who preserveth all his Works, I was confident will there be found at the end thereof. Here I was filled with Wonder, and my wonder was this, Why God should deal so graciously with me, so mean a Creature, so vile,

ſo great a Sinner, why he ſhould do ſuch great things for me; this was unanſwerable: This was too hard for me. But I believe there is no Sinner brought to God, but has more or leſs the ſame Admiration. And here is ſeen a vaſt and oppoſite difference, between a Sinner ſtanding in Forgiveneſs, in Repentance, in God; and a Sinner ſtanding in Sin, in Impenitence, in Self: The one admires that ever he ſhould be ſaved, ſo baſe, ſo unworthy is he in his own Eyes, who look'd on himſelf as more likely than any, to be utterly left of God; ſees nothing in himſelf of Good at all: According to the Anſwer of Chriſt's Sheep on the Right Hand, *When ſaw we thee*, ſay they, *naked, and hungry, ſick, and in priſon, and miniſtred unto thee?* They ſaw no Good Works to recommend them. The other looks on himſelf, on his good Works, yea, thinks tho' he hath none, yet he is not ſo bad, but that he may ſcape well enough, thinks he is as likely to be ſaved as the beſt, ſees not his defects and unworthineſs, thinks himſelf a Chriſtian perhaps, and that he was Born ſo, or made ſo by his Baptiſm,

Baptiſm, and that his Sins are but ſmall. Like the Goats on Chriſt's Left Hand, *When ſaw we thee*, ſay they, *naked, ſick, and in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee.*

But as to my ſelf, neither were theſe Aſſurances, and Joys in believing all I met with here; but it pleaſed the Moſt High in great Condeſcention, to give me a taſte of the Mutual Love that may be between a Soul Reconciled, and its God. Here I was drowned in an Ocean of Delight. O the Depths of the Love of God! that paſſeth Knowledge. Here I found the Truth of that in the Song of *Solomon*, *Love is ſtrong as Death*; here I found the difference between loving God, and loving Creatures; here I loved with all the Heart, Soul, and Strength I then had, and found I could not love too much. God is an Object that never fails, and can never cloy: Here I felt thoſe inexpreſſible Raptures of Joy from the ſenſe of God's Love to me, which it is impoſſible to relate, or make another conceive any thing like them, who hath not experienced ſomething of the

same. Here I swam in Rivers of Pleasure at God's Right Hand. And tho' the Love of God to Man is infinitely greater, than the Love of Man to God can be; yet I being finite, and capable of receiving but my measure, was, and am in a doubt, to say which was the greatest Felicity, the Apprehension of the Love of God to me, or the Ardour of my Desires to him, [whom to Love I found the Life of my Soul, my proper, and most delightful Business] or whether they were equal; but were it possible to Love God without being Beloved of Him: I believe a Soul once in Love, would rather chuse to Love, than to be Beloved, for Love is so like Him, it would always be giving, and the Creature has nothing to give but Love. But I foolishly attempt to rehearse unspeakable words, which I heard in the Celestial Mount, where I thought it good to be, and whence I was unwilling to come again, any more unto the World; yet let me say, before I leave speaking of Love, that I believe, tho' the Finite Minds Everlasting Progression in the Knowledge of God, and his Works, is an exceeding Happiness,

in

in the Life to come; yet the Ardour and Vehemency of Love to God, satisfied with the continual acute sense of his Love to the Soul, satisfying, and never cloying, is the greater Felicity; yea, the greatest Created Perfection 'tis capable of. The true Believer, the Saint will acknowledge what I say may be true.

But let me speak a little, if perhaps I may perswade any that is yet ignorant of the Love of God, that is yet in love with the World; to believe, or suppose to themselves, that Heaven is worth seeking for, that God is an Object worth loving, even at the Loss of all things beneath him. What is it, Sinner, you are afraid of losing? Let us reason together; I am a Man, and have been such a one as you are; I know the things of a Man, and something of what is in Man, what is his Understanding, what is his Conscience, and what is his Will, or Desire. I have not been Ignorant of the Delights of Men, either sinful, or allowable, my Senses have been as quick, and as much satisfied as others: Is there any thing in the Pleasures of Sin, that the Wit

of

of Man (had he the help of a Devil too) can deviſe, that I had not a taſte of. Can the heighth of Abomination add any thing to the Diſtempered Appetite of the Committers of the moſt nefarious Sins, that I have not found inſipid bitter, and loathſome? Are there any ſtolen Waters ſweeter than what I have taſted, and found the beſt, tho' not the worſt, they can give? Or Bread of iniquity eaten in ſecret, that I have not tryed the reliſh of, and found ungrateful at laſt? But to go higher, (for ſo indeed it is) to that Happineſs that is found in Enjoyments lawful, when lawfully uſed; and theſe I know to tranſcend the forbidden, as Light excelleth Darkneſs, is there any good here? What is it? That Man's Mind may find in theſe which I have not found. What is the Deſire of an Amorous Youth, to a Beautiful, Well-beloved, and Well-deſerving Virgin, greatened by Difficulties, and what at length the Nuptial Enjoyments? I know full well. What are all other Dear Relations, and Firmeſt Friendſhip? What is the moſt Loving Wife, or Tendereſt Huſband? I can tell you. What can they

give

give? Much more, much more indeed, then is found in the Bosom of Strangers; what are the most pleasant Children? Or dearest Parents? I have had them. What is there in Houses, Lands, and Money, besides what I have enjoy'd? what is there in Pomp and Grandure, that I have not inspected? Yea, what in Arts and Sciences, or other worldly Delights of Humane Understanding, that I have not had some taste of? What in all these things, or whatever you can imagine? Nothing, nothing, I assure you, if compar'd with the Love of God, very little, if compar'd with what I have tasted of it: That Concord, that Unison of the Will of the Creature with the Will of its Creator, is the most Ravishing Harmony, no Earthly Musick or Agreement comparable unto it. And yet at length I must say, and will readily confess, that whatsoever I have known of the gladness of the Prodigal Son returning to, and received by his Loving Father, I look upon as now incomparably less, than that which is reserved for the future Life, when the sinless Soul shall be united with its glorified Body, and

have

have a far greater capacity then either it hath now, or can have in the ſtate of ſeparation; in which ſtate in which ſtate, I do not affirm my ſelf wholy to have been; becauſe I lived again in the mortal Body ſo ſoon: Tho I was ſo far out of that Body, as then to be in the Spirit, to be and act as a Spirit without a Body, being ſometime ignorant of all bodily things, not knowing ſo much as whether I had any Body belonging to me, or no: Tho my Body (how 'twas then I know not) was both juſt before and after, under great weakneſs, and tedious indiſpoſition.

Whilſt I was in this rapture, what objects were preſented to me, were for the moſt part Spiritual, or Mental; and my buſineſs was thinking, and for ſometime I found my ſelf nothing elſe; and tho' I was in Heaven, I ſaw nothing but Spirit, Spiritually, or with the Eyes of my Mind; no not the Glorified Body of our Lord Jeſus, who is to be known now, no more after the Fleſh; but I was for the moſt part in the innermoſt World, or Heaven of Love; which perhaps is the Third or Highest.

What

What ſights or hearings are reſerved for material Eyes and Ears Immortalized? I know not; I could have none of them, whilſt as it were Separated from all Body, nor ſaw I any need of them; and yet enjoy'd that, which if it were God's will, Heaven ſhould be no other, would be happineſs worth ſtriving for; yea, worth dying for, in which there could never be diſcontent or uneaſineſs. Nay, I am almoſt of this opinion, that ſuppoſe the happy Souls departed this life, from the firſt Ages of the World, are in no other condition, they will be ſo far from thinking the long (to us ſhort-lived Sinners, ſeeming tedious) Ages of this World, long and tedious, that they will ſcarce be aware of any time at all; and only this, that it is the will of God, that there ſhould be further Manifeſtations of his Glory, will make them deſire an end of that ſeparate Condition.

And here ſpeaking of a Separate ſtate, I think it not convenient to paſs without leaving a few Arguments, from the things I have been diſcourſing, to prove that the Soul does indeed live

when ſeparate from the Body, or which is the ſame thing, is Immortal; for the ſake of ſome few honeſt hearts, who perſwade themſelves, and would have others perſwaded, that the Soul is Mortal, and dyes with the Body.

But before I lay down my reaſons to perſwade, that the Soul does not dye with the Body, it is neceſſary to ſpeak a little of Death; that ſo the ſtate of the Queſtion, Whether the Soul is Mortal or Immortal may be the clearer: And that the Reader may the better argue with himſelf from other heads, here not to be mentioned.

By Death in general, is underſtood ſome kind of Ceſſation, and Diminution of exiſtence or being, and may be refer'd either, firſt, to a Subſtance or Being it ſelf. Or, ſecondly, Its modes or manners of Being. And ſo firſt, to a Bodily Being or its Modes. Or, ſecondly, to a Spiritual Being or its Modes; from whence ariſes a fourfold Notion of Death.

Firſt, A bodily being may be ſaid to dye when divers of its Modes ceaſe: Divers

Divers I ſay, for all cannot be ſuppos'd ſo to do unleſs it dye in the

Second ſenſe, That is, its very Subſtance or Being it ſelf ceaſeth: Which ſecond kind of Death, it doth not appear that any bodily being ſuffers. The firſt is our dayly experience.

A Spiritual being likewiſe muſt be ſaid to dye: Either,

Firſt, When ſome of its Modes ceaſe. Or, Secondly, its Subſtance or very Being it ſelf, with all its Modes ceaſe to be.

Now a Spiritual Being, Mind or Soul, and a Bodily Being, or Body; differing in the whole kind, both of being, and Modes of being; having a Nature diſtinct, it were abſurd to ask, whether the Soul be mortal, in that ſenſe the Body is Mortal? it would be to ask, whether the Soul ceaſeth to be how, and what it never was? The nature or ſubſtance of Body is, being Extended, or having Quantity, as Length, Breadth, Thickneſs,

The Modes of body are its being of such, or such a quantity, so Long, so Broad, so Thick, of such a Figure, or such a Figure, so Moved, or not Moved, &c.

The Nature being, or whatness of a Soul or Mind is thinking, and nothing else but thinking; and thinking is all it doth, or hath. Its Modes thinking so and so, of this or that, by occasion of this or that.

The Death of our mortal Body is the cessation of some of its Modes, to wit, the want of its due Organizations, or Figures of Parts and Motions, so far as to render it quite unfit (according to the Law of the Creator) for the Soul to Act, and Suffer by; or by occasion of, and this acting and suffering by and with the Body, and the will of God that it should be so, while the Body is by that Law fit for it, is the only Bond and Union of the Soul and Body; and the cessation of this use the Soul makes of the Body, and of the Bodies fitness for that use, is its Separation, and that which is com-monly call'd Death.

By

By the Death of the Soul, if it be ſaid to dye, muſt be meant, that either ſome of its Modes ceaſe; or its very being, and all.

That ſome of its Modes ſhall ceaſe, yea, do daily ceaſe, there is no doubt, according to divers ſenſes of death, we find ſpoke of in Holy Scriptures.

As the mind is ſometimes ſaid to be dead to Sin, when, by the Grace of God, its diſorderly thoughts, or undue manners of thinking on earthly, vile, ſordid things ceaſe.

It is ſaid to be dead in Sin, when it is deſtitute of its moſt noble and excellent manners of thinking, its greateſt gifts and perfection, as the contemplation, and Love of God: And being thus dead, it may be call'd dead in a greater ſenſe than the body, when it is a rotten carcaſe; this is the Moral, or Spiritual death of the Soul. Death alſo may be attributed to all ſeparate Souls, in as much as they ceaſe to think after that manner they did, by occaſion of bodies, to uſe External ſenſes, as

hunger or thirſt, bodily pain or pleaſure.

Laſtly, The mind may be ſaid to be dead, when it has loſt all pleaſant thoughts, and has only grievous, horrid, anxious ones, without all hope or reſt continually: This may be call'd Everlaſting, or the ſecond Death.

Now the Principal, and plain Queſtion, is not of theſe deaths. But,

Whether the very being of the Soul, thinking, or all manner of thinking ſhall ceaſe? Or, whether (whatever alteration there be, as to the objects or manners of thinking) upon the death of the Body, any thoughts remain?

I anſwer, That whatever alteration the thoughts may ſuffer upon the diſuſe, or death of the body; yet continual thinking remains, or the Soul lives.

Tho' many of our thoughts depend upon the union of the Soul and Body, and come by occaſion of bodily things; yet all do not, and tho' thoſe that do may

may ceaſe at the diſſolution of that Union, ſome thoughts or other ſtill remain: Yea, there is Underſtanding, and Will or Deſire, and Conſciouſneſs of that Underſtanding; and will or deſire ſtill in being untouched or untouchable: And where theſe are, there is ſufficient evidence of life or being.

Tho' I ſay untouchable, I do not mean, that the Soul is in its own nature, or of it ſelf immortal (God only is ſo) or in that manner that God is Immortal; he being Immortal with Immortality, peculiar to himſelf, incommunicable to any Creature, neceſſarily ſo: But that no Creature, nor the Soul it ſelf, can do any thing to cauſe it to ceaſe any more than it could to cauſe its own exiſtence; only his will who caus'd it to be, is able, if he pleaſe, to cauſe it not to be: but that it is his will that it ſhall continue to be, to live or think, I hope will be clear, when you have received the following Arguments.

Firſt, my Experience Certifies me, and may ſomewhat perſwade you, if you will believe me, that a Soul can act,

act, or ſuffer, without the uſe of its Body, or any other. I ſay, I experienced, that tho' all my ſenſes failed, and all my thoughts, that uſed to come by occaſion of body, for ſome time failed, and ceaſed; yet I thought ſtill, I underſtood, I conſidered, I will'd, and that more vigourouſly than ever I did in my life, or than ever I did by occaſion of bodily things: And if ſo, why may it not be ſo again, and ſo with others? You will ſay, this was almoſt but an Extacy: I grant it, but had it continu'd, it had been death, I believe; and as I had no deſire to return to the body, ſo I believe, I had no power, had not God will'd me to return, any more than *Lazarus* had, when he had been in the Grave four days, whoſe death was true, or it had been falſe to ſay, Chriſt rais'd him from the dead: And had I not return'd, Why ſhould not my thoughts have continued ſtill without the uſe of the body, as well as for ſome time? What reaſon can be given?

But a greater Argument for the continuation of Thinking, or Immortality of the Soul; enough methinks to convince

vince the whole World, much more then, enough to perſwade every one that loves God, is taken from LOVE, the Love of God, O IMMORTAL LOVE!

It is my duty to love God, and love him ſtill, it is an everlaſting Obligation, and God wills that I ſhould love him ſtill: if he be conſtant, Can it be thought that he ſhould change, and ceaſe to will that I ſhould love him? No, he loves himſelf, and ſo to do is his Eſſential Juſtice; and he wills to be loved, it is juſt I ſhould love him; he wills I ſhould be juſt, and give him his due: Can it be thought that he ſhould render me uncapable of loving him, tho' but for a moment? No, that would be a contradiction; How then can he will my thoughts to ceaſe? Whereby he would effectually render me uncapable of loving him, of being juſt to him; Bodies don't think, can't love, it is only Souls that can; and ſhall we think God cauſes Souls, who are capable of loving him to ceaſe, of bleſſing him to ceaſe, of adoring him, to ceaſe, when he keeps and preſerves bodies in be-

being ſtill, that can give him nothing? No, God is not ſo much as prais'd by all Bodily nature in it ſelf, but by Souls, admiring, and praiſing him, by occaſion of bodily nature, made for them, for their ſakes: And tho' we cannot praiſe (that is tell of God's Excellencies) in the Grave wanting Organs) yet our Souls can bleſs him, and love him; and is it juſt, and my duty to love God? ſo if I am once in love with God, I deſire to love him, and to love him ſtill, perpetually, for ever; it is good ſo to do, and a greater good to love him always, than to love him but a little while; ſhall I fooliſh mortal think God wills a leſs good than I will? No, no, that were a moſt unreaſonable thought, that were blaſphemous indeed; and it muſt be ſo, if I will to love God always, and he wills that I ſhould not always love him; but if he takes away my capacity of loving him always, by ſuſpending my thoughts or being, he does not will that I ſhould love him always; but it is moſt reaſonable to think, I cannot deſire any good, but God wills as much, and more; therefore he wills I ſhould love him ſtill; and conſequently

that

that my Soul ſtill live to love him.

Again, has a Soul that loves God, a deſire to love him always? And is that deſire juſt, and good, and better than not to love him always? Whence ſhould he have this deſire, but from God? And would God, who loves him (or he had never loved God) give him a deſire to ſuch a good thing, and not give him the good thing deſired? it being the chiefeſt thing he ought to deſire? When he hath ſent his Son to tell us, That whatſoever we pray for (and nothing but true deſire is prayer) in his Name he will give us: No, we cannot ſuppoſe our ſelves to deſire any good of God, but we muſt ſuppoſe him as ready to give it, when it is his will we ſhould deſire it.

Whither might I run? What Attribute of God does not argue the Souls Immortality to a Lover of God? Nor can thoſe that love him not rationally, think, that tho' they don't, God will make them uncapable of ever finding the unreaſonableneſs, or the unhappyneſs, of not loving him? Or let them periſh under ſo great a miſtake? No, it

is

is unlikely, that as he will not render the loving Soul, ever uncapable of finding the sweetness of loving his Maker, so much as for a moment; that he should excuse, or prevent the hateful Soul; the Soul altogether in love with self, at all from finding the bad effects of so great an Injustice: So easy, methinks, we may be perswaded of the Souls Immortality, without hazarding the censure of any for abusing the Holy Scripture, where I think we have all-sufficient, if not such self-evident Arguments, to prove the Soul Immortal.

Lastly, could it be thought that the Soul dieth with the dissolution of the Body, that is, thinking wholly ceaseth? It would not only argue the Soul Created more unstable, vain, perishing & mortal than the Body, whose being still remains, and whose figure may be kept whole, even by Art, for many Ages; but the Soul being dead, that is, all thoughts ceasing, and consequently nothing remaining, being annihilated, the fancied Resurrection of this Soul would not be a Resurrection of the same Soul; but the creation of a new one; and so the whole scope and design of Divine Reve-

Revelation would be falſified, and no Soul ſhould receive in the Life to come, according to its works in this; but another new-created Soul ſhould be Happy or Miſerable, according as this to-be-annihilated-one, had in its ſhort duration been repenting, or to Death impenitent.

For a thing ceaſing to be, nothing can be ſaid of it, there is no capacity, of nothing there are no Affections, and if ſomething Exiſt, where nothing was, it muſt be a new thing, and not an old one; therefore we cannot admit the Belief of the Souls being Mortal, whilſt we hold that God is unchangeable.

I think I need uſe no more Arguments; nor will any difficulty remain, unleſs in this, that you will not be perſwaded, that the Eſſence or Being of the Soul is Thinking, which I could prove from Fundamental Arguments, were it not beſide my preſent purpoſe; but you may do it your ſelf, if you can get rid of thoſe Prejudices, which I know moſt Men labour under, to wit, to think of Souls as of Bodies, or to co-

ceive Souls such as Bodies really, and only are, *viz.* of some shape or other, so big or little, so moveable, here, or there, to consist of Parts, and them only finer than common Matter, as Air, Fire, or somewhat fancied more subtil: And if you had been free from such Fancies, as long as I have been, you would find it more hard to think of the Soul, as Men commonly do, than you now can to be of my Opinion; which you may soon be of, if you can sometimes get into such abstractedness, as to lay aside all Thoughts of Bodily things, and all Thoughts that come by occasion of Body, and then to reflect on what you find remaining. And till your Mind hath thereby such a reflex, and clear knowledge of it self, as that it can no longer doubt what it is, you cannot reasonably contend against what I say, either as to its being, or continuing to be, when I say nothing but that of which I find none that can make me in the least to be doubtful.

But to return to my self again; returning to the Body, I was set as it were aloft, between Heaven and Earth,

from

from whence I looked down on all the Glory and Pomp of this World, and beheld it little, empty, vain, and to be despised: Crowns and Scepters, the Top of Earthly Greatness, I looked upon as small, poor, and base; nor conceived I any thing in sinful Pleasures now likely much to relish, having tasted That, a little of which I thought, yea knew, better than *Methusalem*'s Age of all Earthly Delights. From which tastes sprang an Ardent Desire of more, of the full; Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, said my Soul, looking with longing and delight, to the great Day and Time of my Marriage to the Lamb, among the rest that God hath manifested his love to. Hence had I a strong desire to die: And tho' I had with me an Object of as great Desire, and Care, as this Life doth commonly give, I then could part with that, and all the World besides; nothing was too dear to leave, to go to my dearer God; but yet I resign'd my Life and Death to his Good Pleasure, and All-wise Disposal: Tho' here perhaps I too much wish'd for Death, for the Crown of Bliss, who had not worn my time

the Crown of Thorns; desired the Pay, as soon as I was Listed, when as the Earnest-penny was yet enough: I answer'd my self, God knows what Hour o'th' Day it is with me, perhaps the Third or Fourth; what Work he hath for me to do I know not; I would say what thou wilt, and when thou wilt; shew thy self Glorious, on so base a thing; give me but strength, I am resolved to serve Thee how thou wilt; I'm thine, take me, and I will give my self unto thee; I can have none in Heaven but thee, and none in Earth is worthy love like Thee, or comparable unto Thee: Let me look unto thee to be kept in thy ways: O keep alive, and make to grow, the Grace thou hast given me, till thou call me to the Heavenly Habitation.

Here let the Reader, with my self, reflect, I who not long before, had look'd on Death and Judgment with the greatest fear and terrour, now testifie through Grace the Truth of what the World so little knows, that Death and Judgment, may become so far from being fear'd, as that they may be Objects of earnest Desire: And none perhaps

haps are in a right believing frame, but while (with resignation to God's will) they are so to them. As 'twas with me poor Worm, when mighty Love was thus display'd.

But I, come down from this, the Mount of Vision, (where I thought it so good to be, and so wish'd to go back) yet through Grace with a new frame of Heart filled with Joy and Praise, admiring and adoring God, who had in so extraordinary a manner been Gracious to so vile and mean a Creature, my worldly-mindedness was chang'd, my Thoughts, as to things of this Life, broke out into such as these Expressions, O Lord, I see my right in thy New Testament to whatsoever thou shalt please to give me in the World, little, or much, thy Will be done, I trust in thee, who hast sustained me ever since thou gavest me being, with confidence that thou wilt still do so.

But Ah! it was not long before I found I should be exercis'd again with divers Passions; I must not now re-

joice alone, but see still cause enough to weep: Ah! I am in the Flesh again, not out of the reach of Temptations, yet liable to sin against my God, and grieve my Dear Lord Jesus, on whose Sufferings for me, when I look, and consider my unkindness, I see cause enough for shame and Floods of Tears: When I look'd into the World, and saw I must come out again into this vale of Wo, and break that sweet, though short Sabbath, I had for some Weeks kept, to do the toilsome Works of Flesh again; this griev'd and fear'd my Soul. When I consider'd that I must Converse with Men, yea, wicked Men, and hear the holy Name of God so lightly us'd, and so blasphem'd, and see his holy equal Laws so broke, the Kingdom and Servants of my Lord so low, here I find cause of Grief, and great Affection. When I look on my Friends and Neighbours, and those I'm apt to love, and fear they love not God, what cause of Sorrow here have I? When I look on the Church, and see her Face so chang'd, that through the Glass of the Word (that true Perspective) she scarcely looks like Christ's

true

true Spouſe; *Jeremy*, I think, had not more cauſe for Lamentation.

Alas for me! again I find the three Grand Foes, the Fleſh, the World, the Devil ſtill aſſault, and I know not how far they may prevail. Ah me! the bitter Thorn in the Fleſh, the worſt, methinks, hath ſince long gored my Soul, my naked Babe of Grace, whereby its tender, weakly will to good, is much diſturbed, and the bad Angel beats it on amain, whene're it turns a face towards crooked ways. Nor have theſe Buffetings to humble me been all; but long I went without the Enlivening Anſwer (given *Paul*) of Grace ſufficient for me; and though my Bodies Sickneſs ſoon grew off, I find not Soul Diſeaſes all yet heal'd. Come, great Phyſician, heal me quite; there's none but thou, O God, that can; to none but thee I'll ſeek: for Jeſus ſake, ſend thy Celeſtial Medicines, and root out all the Relicts of my Sins, that I may be made meet to be the partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

Thus

Thus was the Goodness of the Lord to me display'd, which I, poor Sinner, write not for self-sake, but that hereat some others might admire, and love the Author of my good, and so be Happy also to his praise; and especially that those who are near to me, may read, believe, wonder, and find more Grace.

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THE

THE POSTSCRIPT TO THE READER.

THere are Two Things that possibly may hinder you from reaping that benefit I wish you, from the Consideration of what I have written as my Experience.

A Perswasion, either first, That it is all a Piece of Forgery, designed to deceive you; or, secondly, That though it should not be so bad, yet that I my self am deceived, in taking what I have suffer'd, to be the Work of God; it being nothing but Melancholy Fancies, Enthusiasms, or Devilish Delusions.

I Answer,

I Anſwer, As to the firſt, you may well think that if I have written Falſhoods, deſigning to deceive, it is for ſome end or other, tho' a baſe one: For I hope you will hardly believe any Mortal is arrived to ſo great a pitch of wickedneſs, as to love or embrace Evil as Evil, or meerly for Evils ſake, much leſs can you charitably imagine from what I have written, that I have committed ſo great, and deliberate a wickneſs as this would be, only becauſe I would be wicked. But if you will be ſo favourable, as to think I have done it for ſome, tho' but ſeeming good End: There are but Two that I can think on, that you may ſuppoſe me to aim at in this matter. Either, firſt, the Pleaſure of Vain-glory, in a Deſire to be thought ſomebody. Or, ſecondly, Profit, by the Sale of the Book; writing of Books being become ſo common a Trade.

As to the firſt, you may not fairly condemn me, becauſe I ſtudiouſly conceal my ſelf. As to the ſecond, the Bookſeller can be my witneſs, that I have not therefore publiſhed it.

But

But as to the other Thing that I my ſelf may be deceived, and in an Error in believing what was acted upon me to be the Work of God, it being but Melancholly, Enthuſiaſm, or a Deluſion of the Devil. I ſay, that I never was of a Melancholly Temper, either before, or ſince theſe Tranſactions, or ever diſeaſed with any Diſeaſe, that commonly diſturbs the Mind; but was as Merry a Creature as moſt were, and am ſtill perhaps, as can be within the Bounds of Chriſtian Moderation. As to Enthuſiaſm, the word properly ſignifies Divine Inſpiration; and if you take it ſo, I ſhall not be ſorry to be an Enthuſiaſt, and I hope no good Chriſtian or Rational Man will be offended with God, or me therefore. But if the word be took in a bad ſenſe, (as commonly it is) for one that only pretends to be acted by God, but indeed is not, but by a Devil, that I confeſs has been my own Doubt ſometimes; but I am comforted as to that, and convinced it was not Satan's doing, from the Effects produced in my Soul, *viz.* Sorrow for Sin, deep Humiliation and Self-abaſedneſs, hearty Repentance, and

and Turning from Sin: Hope, Love to God, and every Man, Joy, Peace, Thankfulness, &c. which I think are not the Effects of Diabolical Delusions. I say no more, but pray God to manifest to you really, as much, and more of his Grace, than what I believe he hath shewed me, for Jesus sake, through whom, to his Eternal Majesty, be Blessing, Honour and Glory given, while there is a Soul to give it. *Amen.*

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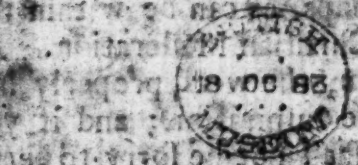

ERRATA.

Page 7. line 19. place; before but. p. 43. l. 6. for 'tis r. is. p. 46. l. 3. *in which state*, should be but once. p. 54. l. 12. for *almost*. read *at most*. p. 69. l. 26. dele the after *be*.

FINIS.

and Self

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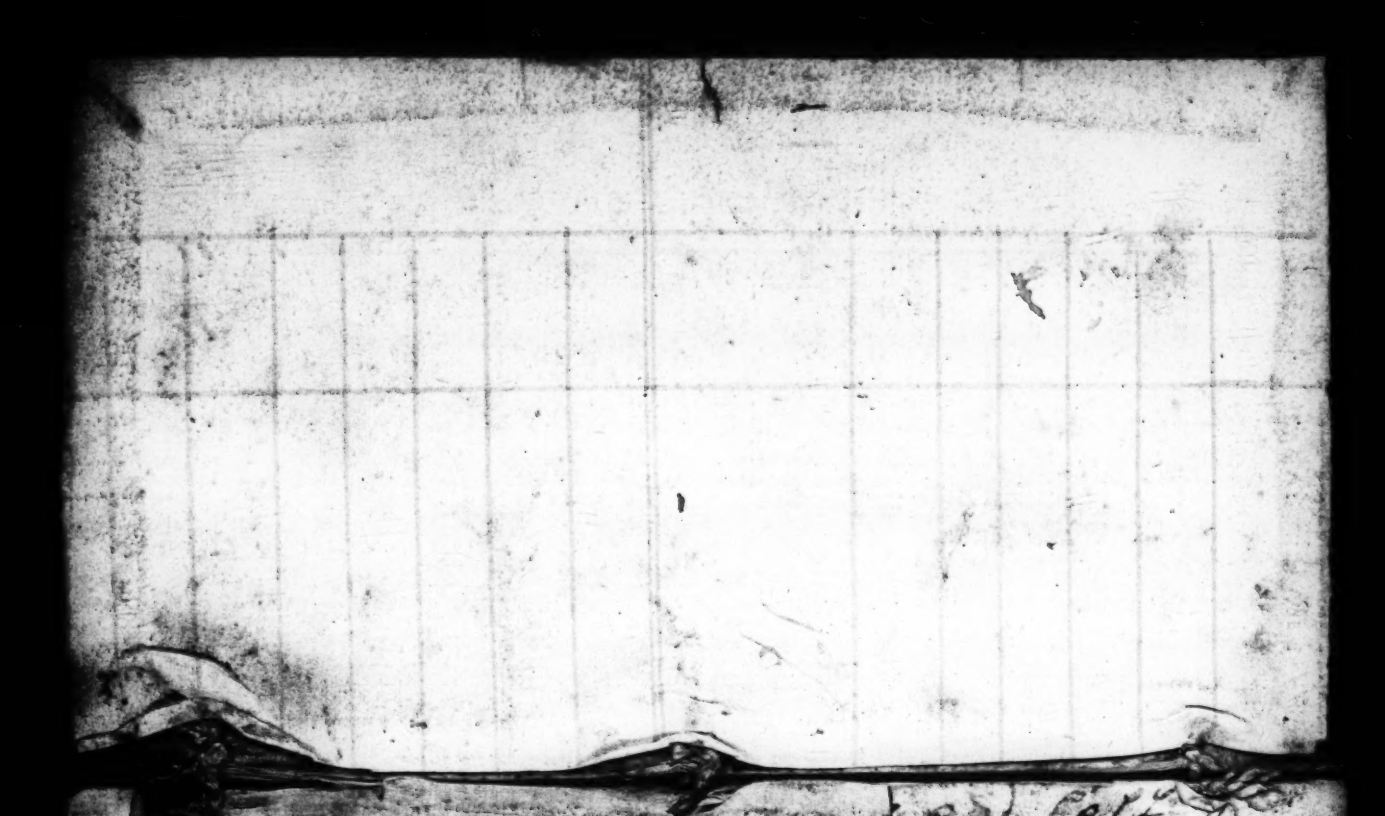
John Corlyn His Book
John Corlyn His Book
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